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ENG160-27

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### The Gatekeeping of the Bisexual Community

Implementing boundaries is similar to setting rules; the primary goal of each is to reassure the safety and comfort of all people, animals, and objects that are in the surroundings.

Gatekeeping is similar to setting boundaries, as they can both be viewed in two lights: good and bad. Jennifer "Jenny" Diane Schecter, a character in Showtime's <sup>TV</sup> *The L Word* created by Ilene

Chaiken) comes out as a lesbian once she moves in with her fiancé Tim. He happens to live in a popular Los Angeles gay/lesbian neighborhood even though he was straight. Upon her

experience of coming out, she not only ended her engagement to her fiancé Tim, but she was also accepted into the lesbian culture. She experienced good gatekeeping, but some members of the gatekeeping

LGBTQIA+ community, specifically bisexuals, do not receive the warm welcome that Jenny experienced. Thesis?

Another example of good gatekeeping is making sure that "...registered sex offenders [stay] away from places where children gather..." <sup>etc</sup> (according to Mary Kate McAlpine of *A Medium Corporation*, an online magazine provider). Bad gatekeeping would be the exact opposite. Outside of the conversation of children and their safety, although very important, the bisexual subcommunity of the larger LGBTQIA+ population experiences gatekeeping. This subcommunity may experience shaming from "...feminine gay men [for looking like] 'straight-passing' men", according to McAlpine's "Attached from Within: Gatekeeping in the Queer Community." What

Cannot this paragraph to gatekeeping; define gatekeeping list what is and is not gatekeeping why its needed or not needed form an argument

rephrase that

how did she experience good gatekeeping

these men fail to realize is that an attraction, whether sexual or romantic, is something that is felt and not seen. It is then up to that individual to determine how they want to channel those emotions. The feminine gay men of discussion are negatively gatekeeping individuals who are no threat to society, but supposedly are a threat to the LGBTQIA+ community. Although the idea of setting boundaries is essential in order to promote healthy relationships, gatekeeping between members of the LGBTQIA+ community is hurting a peoples that still faces discrimination as a whole.

This Paragraph should be sooner

The formal definition of gatekeeping includes the activity of controlling access to certain resources and/or groups. Those that may identify as lesbian or gay, do this to those who claim to have an attraction to both men and women, as their sexuality is deemed as "fake" (Kit Havoc, author of "Queer Enough: On 'Gatekeeping' in the LGBTQIA+ Community", says that) gatekeeping can have life changing impacts. Those who are directly or indirectly gatekeeping the bisexual community are policing "...what identities are 'allowed' in and can access...resources, such as mental health services..." (Havoc 1). By not having access to a queer-specific crisis hotline, or in-office counselling to discuss their coming out experience, the lives of those who are deemed as "not queer enough" (Havoc 2), are at stake. This domineering control can also be found in major cities, since they are more likely to have rainbow filled hubs. Although restaurant awnings may have sashaying flags and their staff may be filled with flamboyant hosts, bisexuals still feel a sense of isolation in the community.

The audience should be given the definition. The average reader would have some confusion up until here

maybe give more opinion here

(A 2013 Pew Research Center survey...gay men and lesbians are more involved than bisexuals in a variety of LGBT-specific activities...". These activities include but are not limited to participating in pride parades/marches/rallies, being a part of a queer organization, or buying a

says that

service or product in support of LGBT rights. The survey also shows that only thirty-four percent of bisexuals have revealed their sexual attractions on the Internet, a place where it is an option to disclose your full name, age, and other biographical components of yourself. Although the survey did not make a connection to the gatekeeping epidemic, one can infer that these results are based on exactly that. By blocking access to those who need a group of people to support them or a lounge to comfortably unwind, the LGBTQIA+ community is dividing itself and making themselves weaker.

Vague

The restrictions and limitations faced by <sup>or "those who identify as bisexual"</sup> bisexual-identifying people are based off of many different ideas and thoughts. Regardless of where these sentiments come from, they still end up belittling the subcommunity. (Michael Castleman of *Psychology Today*, an online and print magazine focusing on the behaviors and minds of individuals, briefly provides his audience) with examples of some claims that gatekeepers may use. In his article "The Continuing Controversy Over Bisexuality", Castleman says that some may claim that "bisexuals were people confined in single-gender institutions...who made due with the only available gender". These institutions can include, but are not limited to schools, monasteries, and even prisons. Gatekeepers could further support this claim by saying their sexuality is invalid, because they have only had experiences with that single gender population. Another example provided is the idea that bisexuals are "...homosexuals who [do] not want to be stigmatized as such..." (Castleman 3), essentially saying that they are too afraid to come out as either gay or lesbian, so they choose to be in the middle in order to reach safe ground. In some cases, there are people who identify as homosexual who then realize that they have an attraction to the opposite sex. This realization then leads to people "...coming out twice..." (Castleman 4). Perhaps some of

these accusations regarding fear and single-gender institutions are true for some, but they cannot be predetermined for all bisexuals. Bisexuals, just as every other identity in the rainbow-flagged population, deserve to express their love for whoever they choose. Unfortunately, the larger community still faces oppression, even after acceptance rates have increased. However, one of the differences now is that the LGBTQIA+ community is also oppressing themselves.

As previously stated, bisexuals are also convicted with actually being homosexual, but not having the courage to express it. (A study done by psychologists at Northwestern University and the Center for Addiction and Mental Health in Toronto<sup>ell</sup> which would be written about in Benedict Carey's "Straight, Gay, or Lying? Bisexuality Revisited", could possibly support the arrogance of gatekeepers. Through the art of advertising in gay and alternative newspapers, the psychologists were able to gather a group of 101 self-identified men; thirty-three men said they were bisexual, thirty were heterosexual, and the remaining thirty-eight were homosexual. To conduct the study, each man watched a series of erotic movies while sitting alone in an empty lab room with a sensor to monitor their arousal to what they saw in the movies. Some of them had only women, while the others had only men. The researchers found that "...gay men showed arousal to images of men and little arousal to images of women, and heterosexual men showed arousal to women and not men"<sup>ex</sup> (Carey 3). However, when analyzing the data collected from the arousal of the bisexual men, about three-fourths of them "...had arousal patterns identical to those of gay men..."<sup>ex</sup> (Carey 3). Gatekeepers might instantly jump to the idea that bisexuality isn't real.

However, what they may fail to realize is that it was only three-fourths of the bisexual men, and that there is still one-fourth of the men that may have attractions towards both sexes.

Really interesting study. One factor in the findings could be that those who identified as bisexual had varying interests in terms of erotic material (suggesting that the gender of the subject may have been less of an influencing factor than their personal interests in porn). I'm interested in your thoughts on this.

Carey would also mention <sup>eei</sup> (a 1994 survey by *The Advocate*, a gay newsmagazine) The survey reported that "...before identifying themselves as gay, forty percent of gay men had described themselves as bisexual" <sup>ew</sup> (Carey 4). With information like this, gatekeepers may still end up finding fuel for their arrogance. Although forty percent had later identified as homosexual, there are still people who participated in that study that may still identify as being attracted to both men and women. Regardless of what data shows, when someone feels that they aren't part of the societal norm, in this case the societal norm of being heterosexual, they should be able to seek support during their time of self discovery. Instead, they are feeling like they are unworthy of receiving that support, and are later facing those consequences in their mental and emotional well being.

Being that homosexuals have faced such discrimination regarding their identity, it is safe to say that they are trying to protect themselves from people who may judge and belittle them. For example <sup>eei</sup> (in Emily J. Shpiece's "The LGB-To Know: Gatekeeping" for *The Odyssey Online*), she says that some believe "...bisexuals stop being bisexual [when] they are dating a person of one gender". Essentially, if a bisexual woman is dating a man, she would then identify as straight. If the same woman was dating a woman, she would identify as gay, but there'd be no option of choosing to like both genders. However, while protecting themselves, they are also putting others at risk for that same kind of harsh and unfair judgement. It seems as if the larger LGBTQIA+ community is forgetting what the letters stand for. The letter "B" in the acronym is meant to represent and pay homage to the bisexual community, but instead of feeling welcomed, they are facing isolation and belittlement. Overall, gatekeeping should have no place in the

## Strong conclusion

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LGBTQIA+ community. If you are motivating and succeeding off of the oppression of others, then you're helping yourself the wrong way.

Strong start! My impression is that your paper is mainly focused on the debilitating effect of gatekeeping on the bisexual community. I encourage you to make this stance (or whatever your stance is) clearer in your introduction.

alphabetize  
by author name!

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